

Policy Statement

Westgarth OSHC is committed to providing a safe environment that reduces the risk of overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and supports healthy outdoor play and learning. We embed sun safe practices into our daily routines, programs, and environments, tailored to our operating hours.

Background

Overexposure to UV radiation is the primary cause of skin cancer in Australia. School-aged children (5–12 years) are particularly vulnerable due to their developing skin and longer lifetime exposure risk.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to have policies and procedures in relation to sun protection (Regulations 114, 168, 170).

Although OSHC operates 7:30am–9:00am and 3:30pm–5:50pm, UV levels can still be harmful, particularly in the afternoons during spring and summer months. On curriculum days, OSHC provides care across the whole day, and children may be outside during peak UV times.

Principles

- The safety, health and wellbeing of children is our highest priority.
- Outdoor play and learning are essential, and will be provided in safe, sun-protected environments.
- Children will be supported to develop lifelong sun safe practices.
- Educators and staff will role-model sun protection behaviours.
- Families are valued partners in promoting sun safety.

Implementation

Environmental Sun Protection

- Westgarth OSHC provides multiple shaded outdoor areas for play, including the large undercroft and other tree-covered and sheltered spaces, suitable for use during high UV periods.

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- Educators direct children to shaded play areas whenever UV levels are high.
- Educators monitor play equipment and outdoor surfaces during hot weather and restrict access if surfaces are too hot.
- Excursion and curriculum day risk assessments must consider availability of shade and UV protection.

Personal Sun Protection

- Hats: From 1 September to 30 April, and whenever the UV Index is 3 or above, all children and staff must wear broad-brimmed or legionnaire hats for outdoor play. “No hat, no outdoor play” applies.

- The service maintains a supply of spare, clean hats for children who forget to bring one.

- Clothing: Children are encouraged to wear sun protective clothing with collars, elbow-length sleeves, and knee-length shorts/dresses. Sleeveless tops are not permitted.

- Sunscreen:

- SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is supplied by the service.

- Morning session (7:30–9:00am): sunscreen encouraged if UV Index is 3 or above.

- Afternoon session (3:30–5:50pm): sunscreen applied before outdoor play when UV Index is 3 or above.

- Curriculum days: sunscreen applied before going outside and reapplied every 2 hours.

- Children are supported to apply sunscreen correctly and independently where possible.

- Sunglasses: Families may choose to supply sunglasses that meet Australian Standard 1067.

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Scheduling of Outdoor Play

- Most OSHC outdoor play occurs before 9:00am and after 3:30pm.
- During Terms 1 and 4, UV levels remain high into the late afternoon — outdoor play is managed according to the daily UV Index.
- On curriculum days, outdoor play is available throughout the day. Educators:
 - encourage children to take regular breaks in shaded areas,
 - remind children to drink water frequently,
 - ensure sunscreen is reapplied every 2 hours.
- All excursion and curriculum day risk assessments include sun protection measures: checking for shaded areas, setting sunscreen reapplication times, ensuring hats are worn, and carrying spare hats/sunscreen.

Education, Induction and Awareness

- Sun safety messages are integrated into OSHC activities, discussions, and curriculum.
- New staff are introduced to Westgarth's SunSmart procedures through the staff handbook, which requires all educators to wear hats from 1 September and model sun safe behaviours.
- Children are encouraged to independently apply sunscreen and make sun safe choices.
- Families are informed of expectations through newsletters, enrolment packs, and excursion notes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider / School Council:

- Ensure this policy meets regulatory requirements and is implemented.
- Provide adequate resources for shade, spare hats, and sunscreen.

Nominated Supervisor & OSHC Coordinator:

- Ensure daily monitoring of the UV Index and communication to staff.
- Ensure educators follow procedures and families are informed.

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Educators:

- Role-model sun safe practices at all times.
- Ensure children apply sunscreen and wear appropriate clothing/hats.
- Offer spare hats when required.
- Supervise children in shaded areas during high UV times.
- Monitor equipment and surfaces for heat.

Families:

- Provide children with appropriate hats and clothing.
- Support the service's sun protection policy, including sunscreen use.

Key Terms

- UV Index (UVI): A measure of UV radiation levels; sun protection is required when 3 or above.
- SPF (Sun Protection Factor): The rating of sunscreen protection against UVB. SPF 30+ is the minimum recommended.
- Sun Protection Times: Times of the day when the UVI is forecast to be 3 or higher.

Useful Resources

- Bureau of Meteorology UV forecast: www.bom.gov.au/uv
- SunSmart Victoria: www.sunsmart.com.au
- Cancer Council Australia: www.cancer.org.au/sunsafety

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- Policy created July 2025 by OSHC Coordinator.
- Approved by Westgarth School Council.
- Next review: July 2028 (or earlier if required).
- UV Index monitored daily via the Bureau of Meteorology.

Related Policies

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Excursions Policy

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- Health and Safety Policy
- Emergency Management Policy

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy is consistent with:

- Education and Care Services National Law: Sections 165, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations:
 - Reg 100 – Risk assessment before excursion
 - Reg 113 – Outdoor space – natural environment
 - Reg 114 – Outdoor space – shade
 - Reg 168 – Policies and procedures: Sun protection
 - Reg 170–172 – Implementation and review of policies

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